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By Congressman Charles F. Bass
For the Nashua Telegraph, May 13, 2012

We all know the staggering statistics: one in eight women will develop breast cancer at some point in their lives, and breast cancer is the second-leading cause of cancer death for women in the United States.

Chances are most of us know someone who has been affected by this horrible disease – a mother, grandmother, sister, aunt, cousin, niece, friend or co-worker. I have been personally impacted by this disease, having lost my mother 40 years ago to breast cancer when I was in college.

In 1972, we didn't know that much about the disease, and while we've come a long way in understanding and treating breast cancer during the last four decades, the sad truth is that approximately 39,520 women in the United States will die from it this year alone.

When I came back to Congress last year, I continued my efforts to find opportunities where I could find common ground with my colleagues across the aisle and work on solutions to the most-pressing issues facing our nation.

One of those opportunities came last summer, as I began working with Rep. Karen Bass, a Democrat from California, who shares my passion for finding a cure for breast cancer.

I had been debating ideas for legislation to get us closer to a cure for a number of years with Nancy Ryan of Lee, the president of the New Hampshire Breast Cancer Coalition.

Ryan, a 22-year survivor of breast cancer, has been a beacon of strength for so many Granite State women who have battled – and are currently battling – breast cancer, and her insights have been truly invaluable during this process.

After countless meetings with experts, advocacy groups, and our constituents, Bass and I crafted the Accelerating the End of Breast Cancer Act (H.R. 3067).

This legislation would help to identify scientific advances to prevent breast cancer and streamline research to avoid duplication of efforts.

The key to our legislation is a temporary, 10-person commission that would be composed of members from the public and private sectors in the fields of biomedical research, business, advocacy and other related fields.

This commission would be tasked with identifying breakthrough scientific advances in research that aren't currently being examined and finding ways to streamline current research to avoid duplication.

The commission also would create a pipeline through which the projects identified as the most promising receive federal and private funds. A primary focus would be on preventing breast cancer from reaching metastasis, which is responsible for 90 percent of breast-cancer deaths.

We've also included safeguards in the bill to ensure transparency and accountability. The commission would be required to submit annual reports to Congress, the administration and the public about its findings.

If no progress has been made in three years, the commission would be terminated. It also would sunset automatically in 2020 and does not authorize or appropriate any federal funding.

I'm encouraged by the support we've received from Republican and Democratic members from across the country – we are now up to more than 160 co-sponsors on the bill – as well as advocacy groups like the National Breast Cancer Coalition, which has done a tremendous job in spreading the word about this effort.

It's my hope we can have a hearing on this bill as soon as possible. This is truly a bipartisan issue – cancer does not discriminate.

Today, on Mother's Day and every day, I am reminded about my own mother's battle with this disease and find strength in the fact that we've made great strides in diagnosing and treating breast cancer.

With this legislation, I hope we come even closer to a cure.

U.S. Rep. Charles F. Bass, of Peterborough, represents New Hampshire's 2nd Congressional District.